

An Essay  
on  
Pathological Anatomy

Respectfully Submitted  
to the  
Faculty  
of the  
Homoeopathic Medical College  
of  
Pennsylvania

On the First day of February One thousand  
Eight hundred and fifty Seven.

By  
Henry Peckley  
of  
New York

Gentlemen,

In conformity with the requisitions of this Institution, it devolves upon me to present to its faculty, a written dissertation upon some subject bearing upon Medical Science.

The difficulty attending the performance of such a duty to the inexperienced Student, whose mind is yet shrouded in the mazes of theoretical and dogmatical speculation; must serve as a sufficient apology for blasted hope, or unsuccessful effort!

In reviewing the various

branches embraced within the  
circle of Medical Science, I find  
none claiming a higher considera-  
tion, and none that has met with  
more unmerited neglect, than  
Pathological Anatomy. Upon this  
subject, however it will not be  
expected that I shall offer any-  
thing more, than to point out so  
far as I am capable, its imp-  
ortance, and the influence it  
will exert over the destiny of  
our Science.

The practice of Me-  
dicine, and indeed every ration-  
al theory in regard to disease, must  
be derived from a proper  
cultivation of Pathological An-



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-atomy. Select any disease you wish, and does it not present a problem which we are called upon to solve? and as a principle to direct us, we have symptoms: some perceptible to our senses, and others to the patient only. These symptoms are an "expression of suffering on the part of the organ affected."

In the animal economy however, one diseased part will not unfrequently produce in a distant and healthy part of the body, by sympathy, a train of symptoms, often so prominent as to obscure the

time seat of disease,

circumstances.

When thus  
circumstanced, what will aid us  
in the elucidation, and serve as  
a guide through this (if I may  
be allowed the expression) "Grim-  
erian Darkness"? Will our Anatomic-  
al knowledge serve us as a  
pioneer? It will not. However  
minute and comprehensive this  
may be, (admitting the importance)  
it can be of little service when  
placed in this dilemma. Descrip-  
tive Anatomy shows us the relation,  
textures and appearances of parts,  
as they exist after death. It is  
the science of the dead mani-  
mate machine, after the "vital

Spark" has fled its tenure,

It explains to us nothing  
of the phenomena<sup>mena</sup> of life. It  
does not show us these parts  
in full active operation, each  
performing their varied offices,  
But it may be said, Physiology  
will here assume its province,  
it being the science of life,

Will a knowledge of  
the healthy always explain the  
morbid phenomena? There is  
a "Pathological as well as a  
Physiological life". Physiology  
informs us of the various act-  
ions and uses of organs, whose  
structure is revealed to us by  
anatomy;— and although a



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Knowledge of this important science is principally obtained by the cultivation of human and comparative Anatomy, and close observance of functions, as they exist in man and animals. Yet by these means alone, but one portion of the veil which hangs over nature's most interesting laws, can be raised.

Pathological Anatomy, aided by clinical observation, informs us of the mysterious relations which exist between the different organs of the body when under the influence of disease, and tells us how far they may be changed by abnormal

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action, and still be able to  
carry on their functions.

It remains for Pathological  
Anatomy to inform us of the  
true nature and extent of the  
disease; and let him who doubts  
its superiority over every other  
means of investigation, compare  
the mere theorist, with the  
pathologist of the present day.  
The former draws his conclu-  
sions from abstract specu-  
lations and scholastic dogmas,  
The latter goes directly to  
the organs involved, and with  
his Scalpel reveals the true  
seat of ~~lesion~~<sup>lesion</sup>, and draws  
his conclusions from ~~abstract~~



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moral evidence. He raises  
the veil which conceals from  
him, the secrets of nature, op-  
ens a wider field of observation,  
and thereby serves to elicit in-  
formation of facts, without  
a knowledge of which, would  
remain forever hidden from  
him.

It is a knowledge of  
this science, of less importance  
to the Surgeon for the investi-  
gation and reparation of  
mechanical injuries, or those  
of organic <sup>lesion</sup> requiring  
operation.

Although a knowledge  
of this science may not be

deemed essential in enabling the Surgeon to perform operations on the healthy part of the body, yet in many cases falling under the cognizance of the Surgeon, he would have a fallacious guide to his knife, did he wholly rely upon his knowledge of descriptive, unaided by Pathological Anatomy,

Without a knowledge of the extent of the affection, its character and its relations, as is frequently the case with other diseases of a different character; here, could he with confidence

in himself, and safety to his patient dare to undertake a difficult operation;

What has enabled modern Surgeons to carry their instruments with so much rapidity, and success through parts where lesion would have proved fatal and stayed the aneurismal flood, ~~and~~ thereby silencing the mandate of death?

Why does the Surgical Anatomist dissect so minutely the different fascia of the thigh, and so closely trace out the tortuosities of the epigastric artery, or take such



deep interest in such points  
 as the crural arch, and ab-  
 dominal ring? - Because she  
 has in view Pathological Con-  
 siderations, and Surgical Ther-  
 apies, "Points" apparently the  
 most trivial, become the most  
 attractive when connected with  
 Pathological Considerations, and  
 it is this that has explained  
 to us the formation of callous  
 and reproduction of bone,  
 and thus shed great and  
 important light in the wide  
 and interesting field of Surgical  
 Science,

Nor does its application  
 rest here; we might extend

it to every branch of Medical Science, and thus continue to urge its importance; but I forbear, and leave the task to more able and maturer minds.

There are not really Students of Medicine, until with Scalpel in our hands, we seek ~~at~~ every opportunity to elicit that information, which will enable us to discriminate between the dissimilarity that exists in the healthy and unhealthy structure, and qualify us to discharge the high and arduous duties assigned to our profession.

But independent of

professional benefit, there is no study better calculated to awaken our deep and serious attention, to enlist our warmest zeal; than the study which acquaints us with that mysterious organization, and the laws which govern the economy of man. "It is not a temple of massive structure", but noble in its unadorned simplicity.

In it are registered the accidents of the changing world; here science sits enthroned and here the silent adoration of the Almighty works are continually ascending like



clouds of fragrant incense,

The Student  
of Anatomy, in an especial man-  
ner, has objects at all times  
claiming his deep and serious  
attention; he has proofs, such  
as no other can offer, of the  
power and wisdom of this  
great architect,

Did not the  
evil propensities of man re-  
quire a moral code; what a  
glorious medium for the worship  
and adoration of creative wis-  
dom - to the enthusiast, to a  
man of exalted virtues and  
veneration for nature's works,  
no temple is more solemn,

no truths more powerful: the  
 mysteries of its operations, ,  
 the uniformity and sublimity  
 of its structure, elevate and  
 expand the mind and soul  
 that beggars description,

When on  
 the other hand, we contemplate  
 the attractions which man has  
 accomplished by the exercise  
 of his intelligent principles,  
 how he has risen step by step  
 from the ignorance and super-  
 stition of his native state, to  
 a knowledge of himself, dis-  
 peling mystery after mystery,  
 which hung over created na-  
 ture and with it superstition

after Superstition, which brooded  
 over and enthralled the mind  
 of man; we are almost shock-  
 ed at the boldness and struck  
 with apprehension lest we may  
 have criminally broken the laws  
 of nature and unlawfully peeped  
 into the secrets of the living God,

Yet since in our view we are  
 only exercising that Superior faculty  
 with which he has endowed and distinguish-  
 ed us from the rest of animal creation,  
 and since the result tends to benefit the  
 human family, we are constrained to  
 justify the course and urge its  
 continuance,

The writer should learn to spell correctly.